

Volunteering in the local community

By Linda Laws
Community relations advisor

It is a sad fact in our society today that at any point in time there will be individuals or groups needing help. On the other hand, it is comforting to know that there are more individuals and groups ready and willing to give at least some of the help that is required.

Within the local community there is no shortage of opportunities to help. Charity and helping organisations are always in need of more support. Although monetary donations are welcome, there are many other ways in which you can help. Buying goods at a charity shop, volunteering to read for the visually impaired, or donating time in a local animal sanctuary are some ways. So, how do you find out about what is required?

Volunteer Bureaux

In order to try to coordinate the activities of the many volunteer organisations that operate in our local area, a number of bureaux have been established.

Forest Heath have a mobile volunteer bureau that covers Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket. Their vehicle is located in High Street, Newmarket, between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Market Square, Brandon on Thursdays between 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., and Jubilee Way, Mildenhall on Fridays between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. If you would like to help but cannot visit the bureau during the above hours, you can leave a message on (0850) 989541.

Bury St. Edmunds has a volunteer centre at 86 Whiting Street Tel: (01284) 766126.

Ely and District volunteer bureau is located at 41 Fore Hill, Ely Tel: (01353) 666556.

From discussions with each of these offices, the biggest need at the moment is for transport providers, befrienders - particularly for people with learning disabilities - and gardeners.

Organisations that help people

St. Louis Family Service

This organisation would like to hear from you if you have any furniture to dispose of, especially when you PCS. One of the activities of the St. Louis Family Service is their Gatehouse furniture and recycling project. The project, launched in 1990, has grown rapidly and now helps in excess of 1,000 families and individuals a year. Other activities include the St. John's Day Centre in Mildenhall, which provides companionship and welcome change of scene for elderly people in the community, and the St. Louis Outreach Group in Bury St. Edmunds, which provides befriending and counselling to local families, the elderly and the housebound.



Photo by XXXXX

Members of the 3rd Air Force Airman Leadership School and local community members volunteered Saturday to clean up the cemetery in Mildenhall.



**For more
information
about living
in Britain,
call me at
Ext. 3145.**

If you would like to know more, please contact the service in Bury St. Edmunds on (01284) 754967 or Mildenhall (01638) 718066.

Race for Life - Imperial Cancer Research Fund

Especially for women, the Race for Life is a 5-kilometre walk/run that raises funds for research into cancers that affect women. There are 32 races planned in various locations in the United Kingdom. The nearest to the base takes place at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, on June 22. If you are interested, call the entry hotline on (0990) 134314.

The Cancer Research Campaign have shops in Bury St. Edmunds, Cambridge and Ely, which are staffed by volunteers who sell goods to raise funds for their campaign.

Support groups

As well as the fund-raising aspect of charities, there are numerous help groups set up for most of the diseases affecting people. These groups can be a great help to family members and relatives suddenly faced with an illness or unforeseen situation, and outside help is gratefully received. The Yellow Pages lists a number of such organisations under the heading

'charitable and voluntary organisations.'

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

This volunteer organisation provides free and independent advice on a range of topics including legal matters, consumer issues and housing problems. The bureaux are staffed by volunteers who are highly trained but not necessarily specialists. Local citizens advice bureau's are located in Mildenhall (01638) 712094 and Brandon (01842) 811511.

Organisations that help animals

There are occasions when families have to unwillingly give up pets, and there are shelters set up to deal with such occurrences. Shelters will do all in their power to re-home such animals - even asking the public to sponsor pets so as they can continue to live. In the local area, The Blue Cross Charity and the Cats' Protection League are among those who have helped base personnel. The Royal Society for the Protection of Animals also does a grand job with animal welfare.

The Blue Cross

Based in Garlic Road, Cambridge, the Blue Cross will be celebrating 100 years of animal care this year. Their primary job is to look after cats, but currently have two rabbits named Hans Solo and Princess Leah. To mark their centenary there will be an open day at the centre May 3, a sponsored walk through the city May 4 and a pet day at Milton Country Park May 5.

If you would like to talk to someone from the charity, Blue Cross will have a booth at the RAF Mildenhall Air Show. You can also call them on (01223) 350153.

These are just a few suggestions, but there are many others. If you need help in getting information, please give me a call.